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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR PATENT

OF: Ernst Maximilian SPENGLER

USSN: 09/929,693

FILED: August 13, 2001

FOR: Method and Apparatus for Molding
Components With Molded-In Surface
Texture



ART UNIT: 1732

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WASHINGTON, D. C. 20231

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

January 30, 2002
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MAR 04 2002
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Dear Sir:

- 1) Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.56, 1.97 and 1.98 applicant encloses a Second Form PTO-1449 and copies of the references listed thereon.
- 2) This Information Disclosure Statement is being filed before the mailing of a first Office Action on the merits, to the best knowledge of the undersigned attorney, in accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.97(b)(3). Thus, a fee is not due for the submission of the present Information Disclosure Statement. Nonetheless, if any fee is properly required in connection with this submission, it may be charged to Deposit Account 50-0507.

- 3) In reference AC (U. S. Patent 6,136,415), at least the disclosure at col. 4, lines 37 to 57 is considered to be material to the present application.
- 4) Reference AD (PCT International Publication WO 01/41999 discloses a method for producing interior trim components for motor vehicles. The reference is accompanied by an English language Abstract. In the disclosed method, a first step involves using pressure and/or temperature to deform the material, that forms the visible surface of the component, in a tool cavity while simultaneously forming the desired surface impression, and in a further step, a substrate or carrier material on the basis of natural fiber reinforced polymer materials, is brought into the tool cavity and then deformed, whereby edge areas of the material forming the visible surface of the component are not covered with the substrate or carrier material, and then the edge areas are bent or folded over, and then the interior trim component is removed from the tool cavity. The surface impression may, for example, be a leather-like grain, which is especially achieved under the influence of pressure. Since the surface impression or grain is formed or applied during the molding process, there is no need for the raw film material to be pre-formed with the desired grain. The stretching deformation of the grain is to be avoided. The substrate is brought into and deformed or molded in the tool cavity in which the previously deformed cover material is located. The cover film based on polyolefin is held in a slip frame and preheated in a contact-less manner, before being carried to a position above the tool cavity. A vacuum is

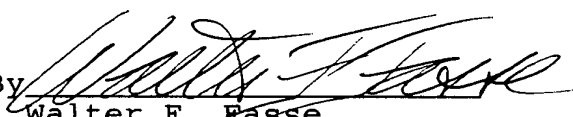
applied to the tool cavity for deep drawing the film into the cavity. A TPO foam-backed film is suitable as the cover film. A mixture of natural fibers and polypropylene fibers can be used for the substrate.

- 5) Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner consider all references of record, return an initialled copy of the enclosed Second Form PTO-1449 and ensure that all references of record are printed on any patent issuing from this application.
- 6) Favorable consideration and allowance of claims 1 to 35 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Ernst Maximilian SPENGLER
Applicant

WFF:ar/4116
Enclosure: postcard,
Form PTO-1449,
2 references

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING:

I hereby certify that this correspondence with all indicated enclosures is being deposited with the U. S. Postal Service with sufficient postage as first-class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D. C. 20231, on the date indicated below.


Name: Anita Morse Date: January 30, 2002